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## PRIMITIVE TEMPLE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

In a work entitled *L'Eglise et L'Empire Romain*, by M. Albert de Broglie, is to be found a short history of the origin of the Christian Church-edifice, or, in other words, a statement of how the religious instinct of man, revived from the ashes of paganism, constructed houses of worship according to a nobler standard of feeling; how Art, through Religion, created new architectural forms for material monuments to symbolize for ages the vitality of a purer faith.

The Christian Temple was not entirely an original structure; it was developed out of the Roman Basilica, which was a sort of town-hall where courts were held; also serving the purposes of an exchange for the assemblage of merchants. The building was nearly square in shape, and very wide, containing rows of columns on either side supporting a gallery and the roof, leaving an unencumbered space in the centre of the area for the accommodation of its frequenters. The Basilica was a very important building among the Romans; in the words of a well-known author,\* "That people cared more for government and justice than they did for religion," consequently, they paid more attention to the affairs of the Basilica than to those of any other building. It was natural that the Christians, on obtaining power, should appropriate these buildings to their purposes instead of the pagan temple, as the plan of the Basilica was adapted to their ceremonial requirements; we may therefore consider the Christian temple architecturally as a lineal descendant of the Roman Basilica.

Eusebius (according to Dr. Broglie) has given us two or three different descriptions of churches erected by Constantine; they agree with each other, and also harmonize with other indications furnished by contemporary writers. The interior of these churches was little else but a large hall of an ordinary building, slightly modified by the ceremonial wants and the symbolic tendency of the early Christians, its form being, in a measure, square. In the days of the apostolic preaching, such were the apartments under the roof where St. Paul, in the silence of night, assembled the small but faithful flocks of Ephesus and Miletus. There, in the clustered columns that stood in the angles of the nave, the Christian saw so many embodiments of the corner-stone, to which Jesus Christ compared himself. St. Augustine said that Noah's ark, "typical of the church, was formed of "squared beams. What is the meaning of squared? "Listen to its signification. The Christian should be like "to a squared stone, for, whatsoever one may do to such a "stone, whether it be turned or pushed about, it never falls, "but remains always upright. Thus may all the trials and "dangers of life find you steadfast." The square had still another merit in the eyes of Christians; nothing was so easy as to trace the sign of the cross by columns arranged parallel to their respective walls. Afterwards, when wings were added of appropriate dimensions, the form of the cross

was given to the exterior, but in the primitive monuments the cross was simply designated within the square. The square was also, according to the prevailing opinion of that age, the form of the earth, consequently its four faces exactly represented the four cardinal points of the horizon, the front of the church being always turned to the east. This latter custom, that of facing the east, was an ancient and universal law; Christians of previous ages had always bent in prayer to the east, from whence came the dawn of a new day. The house where sleeps our holy dove, said Tertullian, is simple, lofty, and open to the morning, for the image of the Holy Spirit loves the East, which is the image of Jesus Christ.

Upon one extremity of this oblong edifice, a small, narrow, and short semicircular projection occurred; this was the choir of the church, infinitely smaller in relation to the dimensions of the edifice than in our gothic and modern churches. This arrangement was borrowed from the pagan basilica, a kind of public building which existed in every town subject to Roman rule, and which served at once as public tribunal and commercial exchange. The arrangement of these square structures was well adapted to the system of worship, and the Christians, as soon as persecution ceased, got possession of them when that was possible, or exactly copied their arrangement in new buildings. In this way this little *hemicycle* assumed the name of judgment-seat, because in the basilica the seat of the judge was placed there; afterwards it was named the choir—a term adopted from the Greek tragedies, for in it was sung the glory and praises of God.\* But it was also the sacred spot of the church, the tabernacle, the holy of holies, the receptacle and dwelling of the body and blood of Christ. There also stood the altar where the holy sacrament was administered, and at which the priest administered the communion to the faithful. It came to be an early custom, to take for a sacramental table a martyr's tomb, one still containing his sacred remains. This altar was not surmounted, as in our days, with a narrow tabernacle, inclosing the consecrated elements, but was entirely covered by a square canopy, supported by four or six columns, from which hung broad veils that entirely concealed the altar from sight; this was called the holy ciborium. Behind this veil reposed the consecrated host, in a casket fashioned according to various symbolic forms; the most frequent was that of an image sculptured like a dove. A cross, sometimes simple, sometimes bearing the figure of the crucified one, was placed over this little interior temple, which was entered by the officiating priest alone, entirely concealed from the eyes of the profane. Thus, at the beginning of the service, according to the words still in consecrated use, did he enter into the interior of the tabernacle of the altar of God: *introibo ad altare Dei.* One may judge with what splendor triumphant Christianity surrounded this sanctuary of its

\* In proportion to the increase of the clergy and the growth of congregations, the choir was enlarged to accommodate the requirements of the service.

\* Ferguson.

faith. From the time of Constantine, the altar, which was formerly of wood, was reared in marble, and enriched with precious stones; it was covered with flowers, and with vases of great value; the curtains were of silk and of purple, and the illumined cross shone resplendent in the midst of never-failing light, glowing in a form of the finest gold.

The altar and the ciborium occupied the centre of the choir. Behind, extended what was called the shrine (*abside*), a semicircular space, whose circumference was appropriated to seats for the priests, including the bishop's throne, the latter placed in the middle, and facing the back of the altar. This throne was elevated, and commanded a view of the entire church. In front of the altar the choir was shut in by three open-work doors, usually of fine carved wood, and equally concealing the interior by close veils. On one side were two reading desks, from which the deacons, looking towards the nave, read the gospel and the epistle. The ambo (desk) appropriated to the gospel always stood to the right; sometimes, however, there was but one desk, and that in the centre, with steps both on the right and on the left, the respective readings being indicated by the side upon which the deacon ascended to the desk. From this elevated place the bishop, as well as priests, gave forth the divine word, and made their comments upon the gospel. The present pulpit specially devoted to a preacher did not exist.

Following the ambo (reading-desk), and separated by a grating which was often circular, the nave commenced, that is to say, that portion of the church reserved to the assembly of the faithful, for into the choir none of the laity ever penetrated. The emperor only, at Constantinople, had a seat there. The nave was necessarily divided into two divisions, in order to separate the two sexes; it was frequently divided into three and even five different passages, as might have been seen a few years ago in the basilica of St. Paul, at Rome, now destroyed. At a very early period there was inserted into the low side walls of these passages, recesses in the form of small vaulted chambers, where the faithful who wished to meditate upon the word of God retired, and gave themselves up to solitary worship. In this practice originated the side-chapels, which are ranged laterally along the walls of our churches of the present day.

Upon the side-wall spaces, and on the friezes which stretched along the top of the columns, the as yet timid skill of Christian painters aimed to reproduce many of the grand incidents of their faith. The paintings of this age, like those of the tombs in the catacombs, were entirely symbolic. There is ever apparent a fear of profaning the great truths of the gospel by exposing them to the gaze of the unconverted. Jesus Christ appears oftenest under the form of the good shepherd, and the apostles surrounding him as sheep at pasture. Orpheus, charming wild beasts by the music of his lyre, symbolized the same thought which signifies the power of the divine word to overcome the natural ferocity of the human heart. Already, how-

ever, pictures even of the Saviour, of his mother, and of the apostles, conformable to traditional types, carefully preserved, appeared above the altars. We owe the preservation of many of these first attempts of Christian art to a process already known to antiquity, but which received at Constantinople a fresh impulse, and this was Mosaic. This art was more frequently employed there than elsewhere to represent paintings upon walls and upon the façades of churches, lively colors being used, relieving upon a background of gold. The imperfect attainments of the artist, far from interfering with the effect of these works in Mosaic, only added to the force of their expression; for, in the natural rigidity of the marble, the faults of proportion and of drawing, as well as the awkwardness of the workman, disappeared; nothing was left but a certain aspect of severe grandeur, which gave to divine characters the semblance of solemn apparitions.

The nave communicated with the outside by three doors; "For," said St. Paulin, "there must be three entrances into one church, as we have three terms to represent one faith." These doors were narrow and low, significant of the humble and painful way to heaven; they led to what was named the third portion of the church, almost as essential as the two others, but which has entirely disappeared in our days, namely, the vestibule. This was a large square court, inclosed within walls, and generally surrounded by columns; it bears different names according to different countries and descriptions, and is encountered everywhere in the historical records of the church. The vestibule was devoted to several purposes; it was in this spot that the catechumens stood, those who were candidates for conversion, or learners not initiated in the mysteries, also penitents not yet restored to full communion. In the basins of a fountain, which was located there, the faithful cleansed their hands before entering the sanctuary. The feasts of charity were celebrated in this inclosure, those ceremonial love-feasts, destined to perpetuate among Christians of all ranks and degrees, the souvenir of primitive fraternal life, and demonstrate by this testimony the natural equality of all men. A precious custom already become degenerated through the inevitable corruption of a rich and prosperous church, but which was still maintained, although not without giving rise to many disorders, throughout the whole of the fourth century! The vestibule was also the asylum of the poor, and the place where they sat to attract the attention and the alms of the rich. Subsequently, it came to be a refuge for criminals.

Finally, the main edifice became the centre of a group of accessory buildings, such as the baptistery, the vestuary, the sacristy or the depository of the archives. These little constructions, ordinarily of a round form, had the graceful characteristics of a Greek temple. In the numerous porticos, which it soon became a fashion to affix against the walls of the main church, the Roman vanities arch swept its bold lines with true majestic solidity; the summit of the church itself, however, maintained for a long

time the form of an ordinary sloping roof. Above a range of arched windows that surmounted the columns of the interior, rose a frame-work of wood, in form like the bottom of a vessel with the beams uncovered. Even when the spaces of these beams were filled with decorated and gilded panels, even when the outer roof, instead of tiles, was of brass, glittering in the rays of the sun, the interior disposition of the vault above ever recalled the origin of the new faith. A seeming rustic roof, overtopping the monumental insignia of Greek and Roman power,—this was a complete and impressive image of the far-spread Christian revolution.

Such is, in truth, the character of the basilica in the time of Constantine. Notwithstanding the treasures which new and opulent converts brought to it; notwithstanding the shafts and columns, of various marbles and of different orders, which sustained the arches; notwithstanding the antique sarcophagi, loaded with pagan sculpture, the masses of porphyry or of basalt that were confusedly got together; notwithstanding that luxurious display of a reformed civilization more conspicuous for piety than for taste, it ever preserved in its leading lineaments the simple and rustic appearance of a vast grange; it might truly be called the stable of Bethlehem, enriched with the presents of the Eastern magi. Oriental genius may have subsequently crowned it with elegant domes, or its roof may have been tapered off with pinnacles shooting upward to heaven like arrows; but none of these enriched and modified forms could surpass the severe simplicity and stately grandeur of its primitive type. Alone among all the monuments of that age, the basilica was the only edifice that was adopted and developed by the new faith. The purity, the vivacity of feeling attached to the basilica, cause one to forget the imperfection of its art and the corruption of its taste. In it we feel, as we do throughout the entire history of this age, the moral spirit which was steadily advancing in the midst of material decay—the *outer man falling away, the inner man growing into new life.*

FERNANDEZ DE MERA, a Spanish author of the 17th century, declares that woman alone was created of divine essence; and, furthermore, that she was endowed with supernatural attributes: the first glance out of her eyes brought both the sun and the stars; thereupon she bent her gaze downward to the earth, and it fell upon man prostrate there in deep despondency. Impressible and compassionate, she had pity for him; raising the "fringed curtains" of her eyes a second time, she caused the sun to disappear, and in its place she brought forth the moon, whose tempered light permitted the offices of consolation to man without displeasure to feminine modesty. This, says Fernandez, *naively*, is the reason why, from that time hitherward, the moon has ever been the kind protectress of true and faithful lovers.—*Translated for "The Crayon."*

Now have the public been disputing, for these twenty years, which of the two is greatest, Schiller or myself! Let them go and be thankful that they have two such fellows to dispute about.—*Goethe.*

## GLIMPSES OF MUNICH.

FROM "AN ART-STUDENT IN MUNICH."

NUMBER FOUR.

THEN follows the opening of the Siegesthor Bavaria; of this statue and the arch which it adorns, we have already given her description. Then comes All Souls day, with an illumination of the public cemetery, and a royal christening. Then the consecration of the Basilica; the structure and principal decorations of the building are thus described:

This church may be considered unique; being a revival of the basilicas of the fifth and sixth centuries—a Roman hall of justice converted into a Christian temple. It is built entirely of beautiful dark-red brick. Adjoining it is the monastery of the Benedictine Monks, built also of brick, and with the same round-arched windows as the church—of which, indeed, it seems a portion. A portico, supported by eight noble limestone columns, runs along the front of the basilica; and three lofty doors, rich with emblematical carvings in wood and stone, lead into the church. The interior is divided into five naves by sixty-four columns of grey marble, with exquisitely sculptured white marble capitals and bases. Entering by the middle door, the lofty centre nave stretches away before the spectator—an avenue of noble columns supporting upon rounded arches an expanse of wall, glowing with arabesques and frescoes, and perforated by a long row of small round-topped windows, high up, and near the roof; which, after the manner of the old basilicas, exposes its beams and rafters to view, but gilt and ornamented, and glittering with stars on a deep azure ground. This centre nave terminates in a lofty semi-circular niche, wherein, approached by a flight of twelve steps, rises the high altar.

On the wall above the high altar, on a gold ground, and divided from each other by the typical palm-tree, stand the first teachers of Christianity in Bavaria: St. Bonifazius, St. Benedict, St. Willibald, St. Corbinian, St. Rupert, St. Gimmeran, St. Cilian, and St. Magnus. Above them floats Christ, as the head and symbol of the church triumphant, surrounded by a glory of Cherubim and Seraphim, and with the Virgin and St. John the Baptist praying at his feet. Beneath the high altar and its flight of steps extends the crypt. Two side altars terminate the outer naves, as the high altar the principal nave. Above the side altar to the right are the Virgin and Child receiving the homage of the patron saint of the Bavarian royal family; above the one on the left is the Martyrdom of St. Stephen—the most beautiful of all the frescoes in the Basilica—the most beautiful, I am inclined to say, of all the frescoes in Munich. St. Stephen, with his meek, pale face, and with clasped hands, falls to the earth beneath the cruel stones of his assailants like a broken white lily.

These altar-pieces are, together with the other frescoes in the Basilica, painted by Hess and his assistants. The history of St. Boniface, to whom the church is dedicated, is told in a series of frescoes, which extends along either side of the centre nave, above the noble columns of which I have spoken. These represent twelve principal incidents from his life; commencing with his reception as a child among the Benedictine monks, and his departure from England to Germany upon his perilous mission—and ending with his martyrdom in Friesland, and his burial in the Abbey of Fulda. The lesser events are told in smaller designs alternating with the large frescoes, and are painted in